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L E T T E R

ADDRESSED TO

LORD NORTH AND MR. FOX.



FRANCIS DOBBS, Esq.
AUTHOR OF THE LETTER TO LORD NORTH ON IRISH
AFFAIRS.

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L O N D O N:

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L E T T E R

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FRANCIS DOLLS

AUTHOR OF THE LETTER TO LORD NORTH ON IRISH

ANTHONY

L O N D O N

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L E T T E R, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

THERE are occasions, on which every man ought to take a part, and in my apprehension this is one of them, for I think you are at the head of a party that threatens destruction to the British Constitution.—Your private virtues or vices are totally immaterial to the community, nor do I conceive that any

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man has a right to attack the private character of another—but in your capacity as public men, every subject is entitled to canvass your proceedings, and point out your designs.

To your Lordship, on a former occasion, I addressed myself, in defence of the rights of Ireland—rights which have since been obtained. On this occasion I shall contend for the rights of both kingdoms; for if Great Britain be governed by your councils, so must Ireland; and I trust I shall be able to shew, that the whole fabric of your system, is founded on principles inimical to, and subversive of the Constitution.

That Constitution, of which you so often speak, I will shortly and fully lay down;

down ; I will show what it is, and what your faction is not ; I will show that it consists in the King, Lords, and People, and that the Coalition is an ill-begotten monster, that threatens to destroy the fair and legitimate offspring of equal liberty.

The Constitution of Great Britain, is Monarchical, Aristocratic, and Democratic. The Three Estates are free, or ought to be so, and independent of each other ; their union in opinion constitutes law ; the Monarchical power carries law when enacted into execution, and as the King is the executive Power, so he has the right of appointing all officers of the state. But as the King is a component part of the Supreme Legislature, and his destruction or degradation

dation would destroy that form of Government, the Ministers appointed by him are made responsible; they are responsible, that the executive power shall not break through the fixed laws of the land; this is their true and constitutional responsibility—thus far it extends and no farther—those who attempt to make it more, either do not understand, or else wilfully pervert the Constitution.

Who ever till now heard it avowed that the King must have this or that Minister? Who ever before, saw a body of men stand up in the House of Commons, and though, perhaps, not in express words, yet in language not to be misunderstood, avow that the national business, could not be done unless you, gentlemen, were at the head of affairs—by this all
choice

choice is taken from the King—were you to be restored, you would not be the Ministers of your Sovereign, but of the Coalition—but let me here trace this Coalition to its true and proper source.

As one third branch of the Legislature, the people have the inherent right of assenting or dissenting from every new law that is proposed; and because it was impossible that all the people should meet and deliberate together, they were allowed to send deputies to consult with the King and the House of Peers, and assent or dissent from what was proposed as a new law—this business transacted, these deputies sunk into the mass of the people, and as fresh occasions required, they, or others, were again sent to meet their Sovereign.

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It would be foreign to my purpose to enter into the history of representation, and to shew how it has happened, that at first the people paid their representatives, and that now the representatives pay the electors ; it is sufficient for the intention of this letter, that the fact is notorious, and that a great majority of the seats in Parliament are actually deemed private property, and that when the Parliament is dissolved, the majority of the Members are sent to re-elect themselves—when your Lordship lately said what you would do if a dissolution took place, and you were again returned, you certainly, at least internally, smiled at your own expression. It is on this system of borough interest that the Coalition is founded ; a majority of this mock representation constitutes the House of
 Commons,

Commons, and they are pleased on every occasion to call their voice the voice of the people.

Here then consists your boasted strength. If you are sent back to a new election, you know to a certainty, that a great part of your Coalition must be again returned ; you hope to have again a majority, and as all taxes are annual, and no new one can be made without the consent of the representatives of the people which you ought to be, but are not ; you think by this means to erect a power that will compel the King to do just what you please—thus the great men who form the Coalition, are a fourth estate, that will, if it succeeds, hold the other three in chains ; that will, under the name of the representatives of the people, and by means

means of their usurped rights, force the King to appoint you to the first offices of the state; you will be made Ministers, not by the King, but by the Coalition; and in return, you must gratify all the wants and wishes of that Coalition. All the prerogative of Majesty will be overthrown; he will not make his own Ministers; he will no longer appoint to any place of honour or profit; a seat in Parliament will be the only recommendation; and to be a member of the Coalition, will be the road to every appointment in the land—may we not fairly conjecture it was for the support of the Coalition you brought in your India Bill? the patronage of the East would have paid your adherents, and secured your power. May we not suppose it is to this the Coalition still look up—for certain it is, that all
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the appointments of Great Britain would be too little for them and their connections. How are the people, to hope, if you succeed, for a reduction of either places or pensions, or any ease from the present intolerable burthen of taxation?—how are they to hope for Parliamentary reform, when, by this Coalition the property of boroughs is rendered still more valuable. In vain is all hope of redress, if the people do not now unite with their Sovereign, and restore the rights of both. If your fourth estate is not crushed, I foresee the most intolerable tyranny. The growing wants of the nation will, under this fourth estate, be the plea of new necessities, and power once vested in your hands, you will soon make it permanent and irresistible. You threatened impeachment to Lord Temple, for his interference ;

rence ; but by that interference, the India Bill, which would have given you stability, was prevented. In such a time, and on such a crisis, I contend for it, Lord Temple's conduct was glorious—when you, by means of your Coalition, had influenced a majority, to become your partizans, it was time for the King and his friends to oppose your undue influence, or part with his Crown—the moment was critical, and, I thank God, you were defeated. If it be unconstitutional for a Peer to advise his Sovereign, what name, Gentlemen, do you give to those, who have attempted, and are attempting, to erect a power, that puts their Sovereign in chains, and under the forms of the Constitution shakes every principle of it to its foundation.

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I will for a moment suppose you carry your point, though I from my soul both hope and believe you never will—I will suppose you are forced upon his Majesty—there will not be a place or appointment that will not be yours. The Royal favour, which, without endangering the Constitution, endears the subject to the Crown, will be in your hands—it will be to King North and King Fox that all will look up—his Majesty will not perhaps be allowed the appointment of his menial servants, lest they should convey any information contrary to your wishes. To the King you will give the title and pageantry of Royalty, whilst all the reality will be yours; and the shadow of Majesty will descend to his posterity. It appears clearly in my mind, that the bond of your union is power—that you

both aimed at it, and rather than totally lose it, were contented to share it—that this was the mediator that healed all your animosities, and buried in oblivion the innumerable calamities brought, under your Lordship's administration, on this devoted country. If, Gentlemen, you carry your point, you may, in mockery, ask your Sovereign for his approbation, when you know he cannot withhold it. When any appointment is to be made, it will run in the Gazette, "his Majesty has been graciously pleased," but every man will understand it is the Coalition. When any favour is sought, it will probably be asked, what member of the Coalition is your friend, or in what borough have you interest?—thus every place of honour or trust will be filled by your creatures—the army and navy may be properly modelled

modelled, and when you have a sufficient force, you may perhaps, openly avow the Supreme Power. This fourth estate, will then have compleatly destroyed the other three, and it will be a Government of about three hundred tyrants, whilst the rest of the subjects will be slaves; or if you choose it, you may easily find means to do without the Members of that Coalition that raised you into power.

These are, I think, the obvious consequences of that Coalition, of which you are the leaders, and I feel it a duty to expose the end and object of such designs. Now or never is the time to oppose them. The army is not yet yours—the navy is not yet yours—the King is not yet in chains—the Lords have nobly stood forth—the People know you are
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not their representatives, and when you speak of their rights being invaded, because the King justly opposes the growing power of your fourth estate, they laugh at the idea. When your Lordship speaks of your love of the Constitution, and that you venerate it so much, that you cannot think of any alteration in the present mode of representation, do you think that one rational man conceives you mean any thing else, but that you love that fourth estate which gives you power? See what the city of London has lately done, and judge by it of the voice of the people. You compare these times to those of the Stuarts, without the least similitude, and think to terrify his Majesty from the just exertion of his prerogative; but all unbiaſſed men now see that it is not regal power that we have to
fear,

fear—all see that the King is struggling for his just rights, and that to keep up his just prerogatives is absolutely necessary to the safety of the state ; but you depend on borough interests, without considering that the King and the people uniting, can in a moment destroy their baneful influence, and wrest from you for ever the very foundation of your power.

I conceive the true and just title of this question to be, Lord North, Mr. Fox, and the Coalition, against the King, the Lords, and the people ; and though my life should pay the forfeit, I will range my little powers on the side of the people, of the Peers, and injured Majesty. You depend on a majority in the ensuing Parliament, who, without considering any thing,

thing, will vote you into power—if you have one, I would advise his Majesty to instantly dissolve it, and never more call those borough-mongers again together. I would advise him then to call for deputies from every city or town of consequence in Great-Britain, and throw himself upon a generous and loyal people—to declare his wishes that their rights and his prerogatives should be fixed on the true spirit of the Constitution—you and the Coalition would, no doubt, cry out against the infringement of the corporate rights of towns and cities, without inhabitants or houses; but I will answer, here is a real, not fictitious necessity—here is a recurring to first principles, and giving substance to what is now a shadow, and not a wanton violation of property and charters. There must be a renovation of
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the Constitution, or the power and freedom of Great-Britain is no more. If you will let the present Premier, who is an avowed friend of Parliamentary Reform, effect it, it is well ; but if you will not, and will persist in raising up your fourth estate, whose existence depends upon the present perversion of representation ; the King has in my opinion, but one option—either quietly to submit, and become a mere nonentity in the state, or boldly throw himself upon his people, and thus rescue himself and them from this new and dangerous power—when your House is dissolved, its members become mere subjects, and you cannot again have political life, but by your Monarch's pleasure. Now, can you even doubt that the people of Great Britain would unite both hands and hearts

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in the restoration of their own and of their Sovereign's rights? What would signify the impotent resentment of your disjointed Coalition. Think betimes of the dangerous and uncertain ground on which you tread, and how you would feel, if his Majesty shall be forced to such a measure, you would be banished from the presence of your Sovereign, and live under the well-merited contempt of all his subjects.

Having thus fully and freely expressed my sentiments on the present alarming crisis, let me humbly offer to your consideration what would render your lives happy and your names immortal. Throw aside all private views, and exert your great and undoubted abilities in the restoration of the Constitution. — Give
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to Majesty its just prerogative, and to the People their unquestioned rights. Consider not who the Minister is, but what measure he proposes. Thus you will render yourselves above the allurements of power, so natural to abilities like yours—your King will admire the disinterestedness greatness of your mind, and the People will almost adore you—then shall my pen be ready to become your panegyrist, and then will I wish you in the first appointments of the State—but never, never can I wish to see the Majesty of England compelled to name its Ministers.

It is not you, Gentlemen, but this fourth estate that is the object of my attack ; if my facts are ill-founded, or my conclusions unjust, I shall thank you
for

for setting me right, and shall candidly acknowledge my error; and if in the course of this letter I have used one expression, not necessary to the fair investigation of my subject, I assure you it was foreign to my heart.

I have the honour to be with all due respect,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

12 MR 58

FRANCIS DOBBS.

London,

20th January, 1784.

